

Appl. No. 09/590,099
Amdt. Dated September 12, 2003
Reply to Office action of June 12, 2003

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Original claims 1-20 still stand in the application. Claims 1, 2, 7, 13, 17 and 19 have been amended, claim 3 has been cancelled and new claims 21-66 have been added to better define the invention. No new matter has been entered by the above amendments.

An amended figure 1 is submitted herewith showing features referred to in the claims in order to overcome the Examiners objection under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a). No new matter has been added thereby. Corrected Figures 3a - 3e are submitted herewith.

Applicant wishes to note that a supplementary Information Disclosure Statement(IDS) was filed on June 30, 2003 and an addition IDS is being filed concurrently herewith.

Claims 7, 13 and 19 have been amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112.

The Examiner rejected claims 1 -18 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 6,167,432 (Jiang). Applicant has reviewed Jiang and believes it neither teaches nor suggests the invention as defined in the original claims or the claims as presently submitted. Accordingly the Examiner is asked to reconsider the rejection in view of the following comments.

The present invention provides a network connected server computer which has a means to create a dedicated network site for providing collaborative workspace through which users share data. Once connected to the dedicated site created on the server the users have access to at least some of the data stored at the site, the ability to access and process at least some of the information and the ability to input and store processed and/or new data. The ability for users to access this data is constrained by their relative hierarchy in the collaborative workspace. An access control mechanism is associated with the dedicated site to maintain this hierarchy. Thus in a collaboration session all information between the users is communicated via the server. These features are defined in independent claims 1, 17, 19 and 20 as originally filed and currently amended.

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In contrast to the present invention Jiang in general terms describes a method for dynamically establishing a conference over the internet in accordance with the peer-to-peer paradigm, which clearly teaches away from a dedicated site for facilitating a collaborative workspace.

Jiang does not describe a system for providing a collaborative workspace, rather Jiang states that once the conference is established, via the designated location on the network no data goes through the designated site or a central host. Data packets are directly sent to and received by the respective application program of each participant. This is different to the present invention wherein data is shared at the dedicated network site.

Furthermore there is no suggestion in Jiang of "a site builder for creating a dedicated site on said server in response to said initiate instruction" neither is there a suggestion of "the server maintaining a hierarchy between the users" as defined in the subject claims. The applicant disagrees with the examiners characterisation of Jiang as describing such a site builder at col. 2, lines 19-28 or a mechanism for maintaining a hierarchy of users.

In fact Jiang teaches at col. 5, lines 3-21, that in creating a conference merely the IP address of the user is extracted and stored. Once again this cannot be characterised as creating a dedicated site. It is clearly stated throughout Jiang that the intention is to establish a peer-to-peer communication system, and therefore this must be implicitly non-collaborative.

Clearly, for a reference to be cited under 35 U.S.C. Section 102, it must provide clear and distinct teachings of the subject claimed invention. Attempting to define the Jiang system as a collaborative workspace system would not meet the objectives of the Jiang system and consequently the application of Jiang to reject the claims is improper. It is believed for the above reasons that Jiang does not anticipate Claims 1-20. Accordingly the rejection of claim 1-20 is overcome.

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The Examiner rejected claim 11 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jiang in that it would be obvious to have the conference chair act as advisor. The applicant respectfully disagrees, in that there is no suggestion in Jiang for the conference chair to act as advisor. In fact Jiang teaches a peer to peer system and thus the concept of an Advisor would teach away from this. Furthermore claim 11 indirectly depends from independent claim 1 which is believed to be patentable over Jiang for the reasons mentioned above.

The Examiner rejected claims 12 - 13 and 15 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jiang in view of Us Patent No. 6,563,914 (Sammon). Once again since these claims indirectly depend from claims which are patentable over Jiang for the reason mentioned above, it is believed that this rejection is overcome.

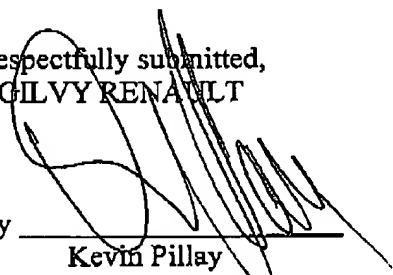
The Examiner further rejected claim 14 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jiang in view of Sammon and further in view of US Patent no. 5,940,834 (Pinard). Claim 14 also depends indirectly from independent claim 1, accordingly for reasons similar to those above, this rejection is overcome.

The applicant has also reviewed the prior art references made of record and believes that it neither teaches nor suggest the invention as defined in claims 1 - 66 presently on file.

In view of the above, applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,
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